

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
NRCS / FSA MEETING ROOM-DAVENPORT WA
Wednesday, January 14, 2015**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 8:30 AM by Chairman, Mike Carstensen. Those attending the meeting were as follows: Eddie Johnson and Jim Baye-LCCD Supervisors; Mark Stedman, Lincoln County Commissioner; Melissa Michael, FSA; Todd Baarstad, WDFW; and Elsa Bowen, Stacey Dewald, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

- *1. Jim moved to approve the December 10 minutes as presented. Eddie seconded. Motion passed.*

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- *2. Eddie moved to pay and approve vouchers #9327 to #9353, with three EFT's, totaling \$44,589.89. Jim seconded. Discussion was held. The vouchers (and total) include the last vouchers of 2014 and the first vouchers of 2015. Motion passed.*
- *3. Eddie moved to submit voucher #3 for the EA-14-04 CSP grant in the amount of \$3192.75 to the Conservation Commission. Jim seconded. Motion passed.*
- *4. Eddie moved to submit voucher #4 for the EA-14-04 CSP grant in the amount of \$1,429.30 to the Conservation Commission. Jim seconded. Motion passed.*
- *5. Eddie moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for November 25, 2014 through December 23, 2014 be approved. The total amount owed was \$2,780.20. Jim seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- *6. Eddie moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Cenex credit card with a closing date of December 10, 2014 be approved. The total amount owed was \$333.88. Jim seconded. Motion passed.*

After review, the board initialed each page of the Bank statements for the checking and money market accounts.

The board reviewed the report of the current annual leave/sick leave balances for the District employees.

- **7. Eddie moved to approve the Treasurer's report and the Grant's report as presented. Jim seconded. Motion passed.**

C. AGENDA

Lincoln County Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Stedman thanked the District for working together on sage grouse issues in the county.

He noted that the state of Washington is walking away from its responsibility to monitor/regulate Group B wells and is turning this task over to the counties, but without providing the necessary funding.

Obtaining surface water from the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project for the southwest corner of Lincoln County to replace declining groundwater levels is a continuing challenge. Farmers in Franklin and Adams counties adjacent to the East Low Canal are lobbying to reduce the size of the proposed pipes to carry water east from the canal in order to reduce the cost per acre of delivering water to their ground. With smaller pipe size, there would not be enough capacity to deliver water far enough east to supply irrigators in the southwest corner of Lincoln County. Commissioner Stedman will speak with irrigators in the SW corner of the county and ask them forward these concerns to Bernie Erickson, the East Irrigation District representative, and encourage the lateral pipe size to remain the current planned size.

David and Elsa gave a presentation on the current Lincoln County Passive Rehydration Project at the recent Lincoln County Commissioners meeting.

The county budget has been balanced. With county revenues flat for the projected future, money has been pulled out of everybody's budget to balance the budget. Commissioner Stedman voiced concerns that the state appears to be slowing removing funding and support for the Public Works Trust fund, which has been used extensively by counties and cities for public works projects with its low 1% loan rate.

Counties and cities will not receive any tax revenues from marijuana production at this time. WASAC is lobbying for counties to get a 50/50 split with the state from marijuana tax revenues.

Review of 89.08

Board members reviewed hardcopies of 89.08.

2014 Report of Accomplishments

Elsa passed around a copy of the 2014 Report of Accomplishments, which shows conservation projects from all 45 conservation districts across the state. Firewise Fuel Reduction projects are the 2014 Feature Accomplishment for Lincoln County CD.

Review of Retirement Options

Elsa reminded the board members that the Washington State Deferred Compensation Program (DCP) is the only option available to the District because the District is considered a public agency. There would be no cost for the District to participate in the program but there would be a small fee for District employees to participate in the

program. Employees would need to contribute a minimum of \$30 per month to participate in the program. Employees would not pay any federal income taxes on contributions to DCP until the money is retrieved from the account. There is a wide variety of funds for employees to choose. The Board could decide to allow employees to contribute some or all of the \$100 per month currently being provided by the District to employees for retirement to DCP.

8. Jim moved that District employees be given the option to contribute some or all of the \$100 per month given to them by the District for retirement into the Washington State Deferred Compensation Program starting in January 2015, and that the Board approve Resolution 2015-1, which requests that LCCD be approved by the Department of Retirement Systems, Deferred Compensation Program to participate in DCP. Eddie seconded. Motion passed.

ALEA Grant Applications

District staff have been working with WDFW staff, Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area, on the following two proposed ALEA grant applications:

- 1) Removal of the last 8.5 miles of interior barbed wire fencing within the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area to prevent sage grouse mortality from collisions with the upper barbed wires.
- 2) Bird ID signs for the north side trail and planting along Audubon Lake in Reardan.

9. Jim moved that the District apply for both of the ALEA grants as proposed. Eddie seconded. Motion passed.

Verle Kaiser Grant

Stacey handed out copies of the Field Border brochure to the board members. The brochure is part of the outreach education for the field border grant that the District is working in cooperation with Lincoln County. The county is supporting the installation of field borders in order to help protect roadsides and ditches and keep roads cleaner and safer for driving. FSA and NRCS have already reviewed the brochure, approved it, and will use it to advertise their field border programs. The board agreed by general consensus to approve the brochure. Some concerns were raised about wildlife using the field borders next to roads and possibly leading to more collisions with vehicles.

FSA Report

Melissa noted the deadline for selecting PLC or ARC for wheat or barley is March 31st. A lot of producers have already selected ARC/county for wheat, as it can pay up to \$5 more per acre than for barley. However, if producers have grown barley on ground in at least 1 of the last 5 years, they can not convert all of this acreage to wheat acreage and must leave some of the acreage as barely acreage.

The NAPP insurance purchase deadline is today, January 14, and covers many other crops besides wheat and barley, but it does not cover grazing.

Producers have until the end of January to decide if they want to take their CRP out early. The CRP fields have to be at least 5 years old, and the HEL index must be less than 18 and so very highly erodible land is not eligible for early take out.

Direct Seed Conference

Jim, Elsa and Stacey will be attending the Direct Seed Conference in the Tri-Cities on January 20 - 22.

WACD Webinar

Elsa watched the WACD webinar yesterday. WACD is requesting that conservation districts across the state write the Governor and their local legislators and tell them exactly what programs and staff will be cut if their District has to absorb a 15% budget cut from the Conservation Commission. There is an expectation that the Districts won't have their budgets cut 15%.

Executive Session

The Board went into executive session under option 1(g) of RCW 42.30.110 at 10 AM to review and discuss personnel issues for about one half hour. The board came back out of executive session at 10:35AM.

10. Eddie moved that the District proceed forward as soon as possible with interviews for the Grant Financial Administrator and Projects Manager position. Jim seconded. Motion passed.

WDFW Report

Todd Baarstad noted that he has ordered 1,900 trees and shrubs to plant on private landowner projects in spring 2015. He will be assisting with labor and WDFW equipment on Ken Korn's wildlife planting and the City of Davenport windbreak planting, two District projects for spring 2015. Cooperative restoration projects, canola plantings for wildlife, and food plots are planned for the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area in 2015. The Z Lake project, with its 6 new pond cells over 56 acres, is actually recharging, even with the last 2 dry years. About 8,000 acres are still available for sign up for the CRP SAFE program. The CCAA acronym stands for Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurance. USFW and WDFW have been working on the establishment of a CCAA for sage grouse before more actions are taken on the possible listing of sage grouse as endangered. If landowners sign 30 year agreements under the CCAA, they will not be held responsible for any incidental killing of sage grouse on their land. There already has been a lot of misinformation circulating in the county about the potential CCAA for sage grouse. An informational meeting in Creston on January 26, sponsored by the Cattlemans Association, has been scheduled to discuss the CCAA program and sage grouse concerns in Lincoln County.

Lincoln County Passive Rehydration Project

David showed two maps on the wall and discussed the current status of the Lincoln County Passive Rehydration project. The original route for pumping water out of Lake Roosevelt at Lincoln, over the top of the divide, and delivering water to the Hurley Lake area at the headwaters of Lake Creek between Creston and Davenport along Highway 2 has been abandoned due to the high costs of pumping and due to the opposition of the Colville and Spokane tribes with pumping any more water out of Lake Roosevelt.

A second route for taking water out at the south end of Banks Lake at the dam and pumping it through a long pipeline along Highway 2 before heading south to the

Coffeepot Lake area has also been abandoned, due to the lack of support for the project along this route, and due to opposition from the East Irrigation district for taking water out before it has a chance to run further down the main canal and generate electricity.

The third and current route being evaluated would take water out at the emergency spillway at Billy Clapp dam and use a siphon to move water to the city of Wilson Creek area in Phase I. Subsequent Phases II and III would pipe the water farther east along the Crab Creek channel and then pump the water up sub-tributaries to the north east. Phase III would take the water to the Irby area, and then pump it up to the end of Pacific Lake, but the amount of water delivered to Pacific Lake would not be enough to fully rehydrate it. This third route would require many more miles of pipeline but would require much less pumping lift than the first route pumping water out of Lincoln. One disadvantage of the third route is that the water could only be pumped during the irrigation season, and that necessary repairs are made to the main canal system during the off season. One advantage of this route is that the East Irrigation District is more likely to support it, and irrigation district funds might be used to help construct the project. Another advantage is that this irrigation water, once it is in Banks Lake, is BOR water and will be much more feasible to use for the passive rehydration project.

David noted that the current grant evaluating the third route will end by the end of May, with several public meetings held in early May. For the passive rehydration project to continue past May, David asked the Board if Lincoln County CD would be willing to promote the project. Eddie suggested that GWMA, the cities in Lincoln County area, and the East Irrigation District need to be on board to promote the passive rehydration project.

NRCS Report

Ann provided an email report on West Palouse team activities. There is still no update from Doug Allen on the lease agreement. The CSP application deadline has still not been announced. WPT staff has been very busy working on CSP renewal contracts, 2015 CSP applications, contract payments and modifications, and EQIP application screening and ranking of HIGH priority applications. The State wide Local Work Group meeting will be held this year on January 27 in Spokane from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM by video conferencing, but the DC's and LWG chairman are strongly encouraged to attend the meeting in Spokane. Elsa reminded the Board that all farm entities with a SAMS number need to renew it once every year. If farm entities ignore the emails to renew their SAMS number and let it expire, they will have to go through the entire entry process again.

Rain Gauges

Elsa showed the Board one of the new 40 dual cylinder rain gauges ordered. About 20 of the gauges have been/will be given to the precip collection cooperators across the county to replace the old weathered rain gauges, and about 10 of the other 20 extra gauges have already been sold for \$37.70 apiece.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Chairman adjourned the meeting at 12:30 PM.

The next District Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 11, at 8:30 AM at the NRCS/FSA Meeting Room. The long range planning session will be held following the end of the regular meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Keith R. Schafer, Secretary



Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 10 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the December 10 minutes as presented.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #9327 to #9353, with three EFT's, totaling \$44,589.89.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #3 for the EA-14-04 CSP grant in the amount of \$3,192.75 to the Conservation Commission.
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- 8. M/S/P that District employees be given the option to contribute some or all of the \$100 per month given to them by the District for retirement into the Washington State Deferred Compensation Program starting in January 2015.
- 9. M/S/P that the District apply for both of the ALEA grants as proposed.
- 10. M/S/P that the District proceed forward as soon as possible with interviews for the Grant Financial Administrator and Projects Manager position.